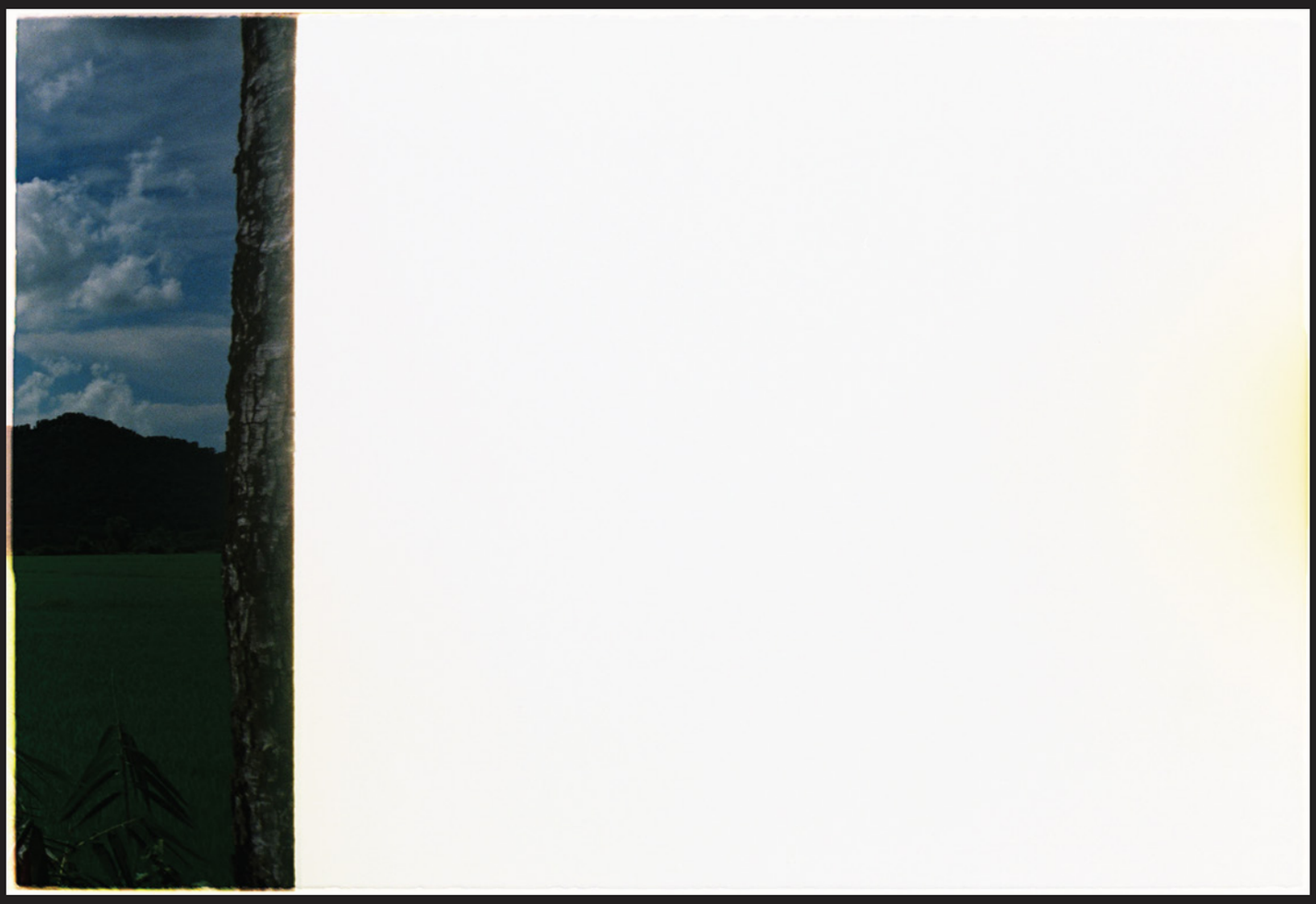


First Report on Within & Beyond

JULY 2026
–
SEPTEMBER 2026

INTRODUCTION TO *WITHIN & BEYOND*



Within & Beyond: A Taxonomy in Exhibition-making is a year-long educational and curatorial initiative conceived by Vicky Do, with the participation of Le Anh Thu, Nguyen Vo Bao Han and Nhi Phan. Exploring the different phases and methodologies of meaning-making through exhibitions, *Within & Beyond: A Taxonomy in Exhibition-making* approaches these questions via the topic of *A Survey of Landscape* – the central framework for this year's edition. Over the course of one year from July 2026 to July 2027, the participants will receive direct mentorship and professional support from the NAF team and external practitioners through discussions, workshops, studio visits, and field research designed specifically for the program.

I

JOURNEY TO AN GIANG & DIALOGUE WITH VU THANH SON

VU THANH SON

Based in Saigon, Vu Thanh Son is a writer whose research focuses on iconic figures of the South of Vietnam, such as Phan Thanh Gian, Petrus Ky, and Huynh Phu So. *Sóng đồng bằng* (Waves of the Delta) is his most recently published novel; set in Cochinchina during the dawn of modern Vietnam.

Within & Beyond begins with a journey to An Giang, raising the question of why fieldwork is necessary. This journey is not merely a physical relocation but also a conceptual voyage through the world of the literary work *Sóng đồng bằng* (Waves of the Delta) by writer Vu Thanh Son. An Giang was chosen as the starting point because of the region's complex, diverse history, shaped by a series of power struggles reflected in shifting physical boundaries. The subsequent talk is divided into two main parts. The first is an in-depth dialogue with Vu Thanh Son regarding *Sóng đồng bằng*, exploring how literature employs place names to anchor memory and reconstruct the mental map of a historical era.

Engaging with ideas sparked by the work, Le Anh Thu, Nguyen Vo Bao Han, and Nhi Phan draw upon their fieldwork experiences to address three major questions: How does the body orient itself when disoriented in a borderland? How can we re-map ecological entities that have completely vanished from physical reality? And how can we trace the historical scars hidden beneath a landscape's surface tranquility?

"I realized that transportation and physical movement are far more than logistical details... waterways, roads, and transit routes act as fundamental infrastructures that shape how we perceive, produce, and organize knowledge"

- Nguyen Vo Bao Han

"The concept 'To mark is to outline' demonstrates that attempting to mark an entity is essentially just setting a temporary framework cutting across a fluid, continuous landscape"

- Nhi Phan





Stripped of geographic coordinates, how do you locate yourself within an unfamiliar landscape?



II

FIELD VISIT AND BOOK DISCUSSION WITH VO DUY KIM

VO DUY KIM

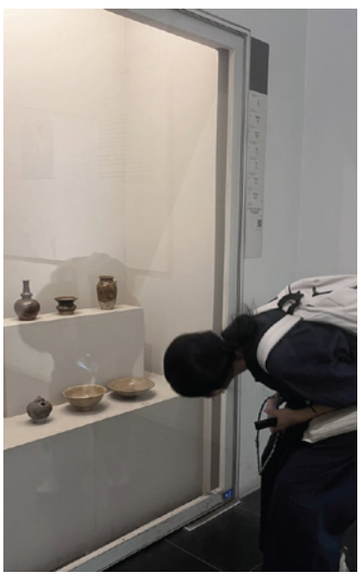
Vo Duy Kim is a Ph.D. student in Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Urban Planning at Harvard University. His research focuses on 19th-century Italian architectural history, discrepancies between textual records and archaeological evidence from European excavations, and the influence of scientific methodology on observation and documentation in modern architectural practice.



The field visit and book discussion program with Vo Duy Kim comprises two sessions: the discussion of Robert Wood's *The Ruins of Palmyra, Otherwise Tedmor in the Desart* (1753) examines the early stages of modern archaeology, the relationship between books, printing, and societal discourse, and how 18th-century European travelers perceived exotic ruins, as well as the interplay between material and textual evidence in establishing historical truth. In light of the discourse on truth, two field sites were selected to respond to and expand on this discussion. The first site is the Ho Chi Minh City Museum of History, specifically the galleries displaying artifacts from the Óc Eo culture and the Kingdom of Champa, as well as the collection of cultural scholar Vương Hồng Sển. The museum serves as a space where artifacts and archaeological finds are systematized and chronologically arranged into representational narratives. The second site is the Memorial Park for COVID-19 Victims, situated within the "Golden Triangle" bordering Saigon and Cholon; here, a site – once a legendary private landmark and part of the city's heritage – has been repurposed into a communal memorial space, generating a historical narrative about the COVID-19 pandemic, an event experienced and deeply felt by virtually everyone.



What threshold transforms personal memories into a collective monument?





In addition to field activities, the program offers workshops exclusively for participants, including:

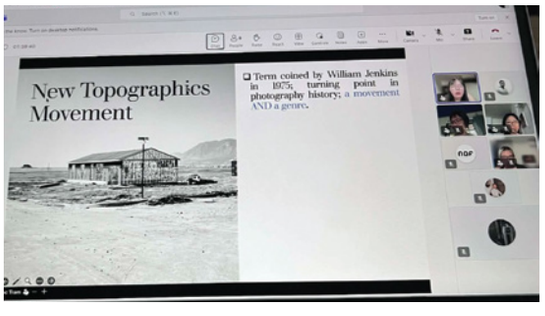
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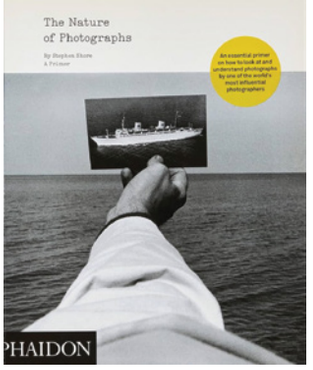
ARTWORK ANALYSIS WITH TRAM LUONG

TRAM LUONG

Holding a Ph.D. in Anthropology from Yale University and currently lecturing at Fulbright University Vietnam, Tram Luong is a lens-based multimedia artist, anthropologist, and educator. Her work is situated at the intersection of anthropology, visual arts, and public advocacy, often taking a research-based approach to artistic mediation.

The Artwork Analysis workshop with Prof. Tram Luong centered on the theme *Damage-as-metaphor: New(er) Topographics in the Post-conceptual City*. The lecture began by examining early photographic representations of the "old" topographics – a tradition that depicted pristine wilderness through a romantically exotic lens – before transitioning to the *New Topographics* movement that emerged in the 1970s. This movement marked a historical turning point by redirecting the camera toward the starkly "unattractive" man-altered landscapes: suburban sprawls, hyper-industrialized vistas, and mundane postwar environments. By juxtaposing the old and new topographics through the photographic medium, the lecture introduced contemporary photographic practices within the post-conceptual condition under high capitalism. The final focus rested on the approach of *damage-as-metaphor*, which employs the visual idiom of ruins to preserve memory and stage interventions into the human-environment, nature-culture binaries.



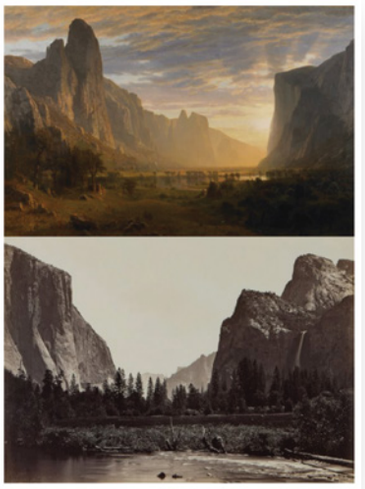




In what ways can sites of ruination become grounds for critical imaginings?

Landscape Politics: The "old" topographics

- New topographics emerged in the 1970s as a defining moment in contemporary photography, but what was the "old" topographics?
- Landscape photography in the traditions of Ansel Adams, Carleton Watkins, among others.
- Picturesque depiction of pristine, romantic wilderness.



UPPER: Albert Bierstadt, Looking Down the Yosemite Valley, California, 1865. LOWER: Carleton Watkins, Yosemite Valley, from Big Oak Flat Road, 1878-81.

II

ART HANDLING WITH NHUNG LE

NHUNG LE

Nhung Le works as a freelance art handler. She has 16 years of experience in art handling: exhibition coordination (care for all aspects of artwork installation, de-installation), responsible for the safe packing/unpacking, and documentation for artwork shipping (domestic & international shipment).

Throughout the workshop, art handler Nhung Le shared practical experiences in art handling and packing, including lessons learned from accidental damage. The session began with a discussion on safe handling techniques for various materials (oil paintings, rolled paper, silk, glass, mica, ceramics, wood, etc.), emphasizing the invaluable spiritual worth of each artwork. Following this, participants were guided through optimal packing and transportation rules, from protecting artworks against temperature, humidity, and mold to managing risks across different modes of transport. Finally, the program concluded with a hands-on practice session on basic cleaning and packing of a canvas painting, as well as how to prepare a condition report.



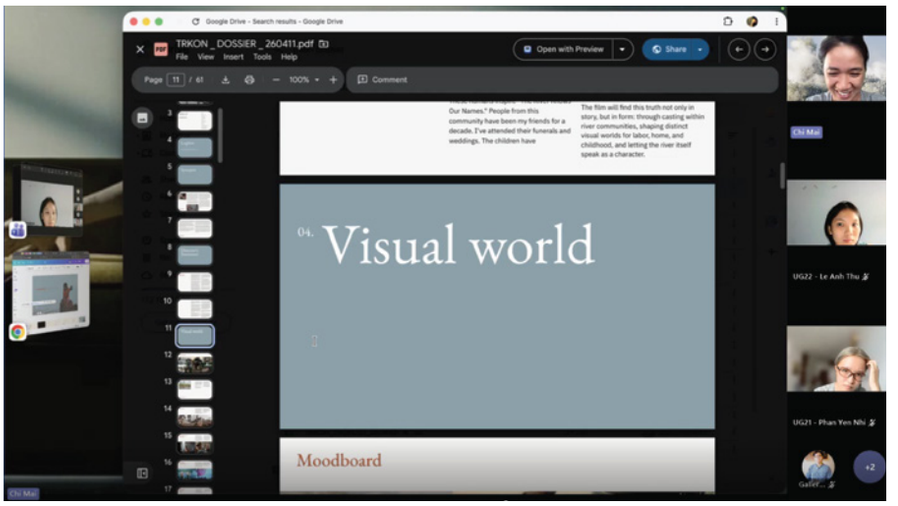
III

PROPOSAL WRITING WITH MAI HUYEN CHI

MAI HUYEN CHI

Mai Huyen Chi is a Vietnamese writer-director working across fiction and documentary film. Her work reflects on how history, power, and the politics of memory shape the stories we tell, while remaining attentive to the intimate lives unfolding within and against these forces.

The workshop guided participants on structuring and developing effective project proposals, focusing on adapting a single pitch to align with the specific mandates and expectations of various funding bodies or organizations. By peer-reviewing participants' initial concepts and sharing practical case studies from her own film projects, film director Mai Huyen Chi also outlined the essential components of a pitch deck, including project synopses, director statements, visual directions, and budget estimations. Furthermore, the session emphasized the importance of framing the current project within a broader, long-term artistic trajectory and demonstrated how the proposal-writing process itself can help clarify theoretical foundations and contextualize the timeliness of the work.



The following reports will be materialized as our curators participate in the upcoming activities

to be continued